

**SUMMARY OF THE
ACCREDITATION PROCESS COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 15, 1999**

The Accreditation Process Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Wednesday, December 15, 1999, at 1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) as part of the Fifth NELAC Interim Meeting in Washington, DC. The meeting was led by its chair, Dr. John Griggs of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss language involved in the accreditation of mobile laboratories and the accreditation of noncontiguous auxiliary fixed-based laboratories and to open the floor to discussion of other topics.*

ACCREDITATION OF AUXILIARY MOBILE LABORATORIES

The discussion began with an overview of the proposed changes in Chapter 4.0 of the NELAC Standards involving mobile laboratory accreditation. Questions from the floor were raised on the need for mobile laboratories that are associated with a fixed-based laboratory to obtain separate accreditations, and for companies consisting only of multiple mobile laboratories that are not associated with a fixed-based laboratory to obtain accreditation for each mobile unit. The committee explained previous reasons for those requirements to the satisfaction of the audience.

It was suggested from the floor that in the proposed changes to Chapter 4, Section 4.0c, the terminology “temporary situations” be expanded to include “special cases only” or similar language in relation to situations that require deployment of a mobile laboratory in the field. The committee agreed to discuss the best way to clarify this terminology and will propose new language during future meetings.

The subject of mobile laboratories continually reconfiguring their equipment was also discussed in relation to primary accrediting authority notification and accreditation. The committee agreed to consider this issue.

Comments from the floor indicated that there was some disagreement with the current language in the standard which states that mobile laboratories should be required to be separately accredited from an associated fixed-based laboratory. The committee members agreed to review the language.

Dr. Barton Simmons, Chair of the Field Measurements *Ad Hoc* Committee, spoke of the need to define differences in the scope of field measurements and mobile laboratory analyses. It was agreed that members of the Accreditation Process Committee and the newly established Field Activities Committees would participate in meetings at their earliest convenience to clarify definitions that are crucial to Chapter 4 definitions of mobile laboratories and the requirements for their accreditation.

NONCONTIGUOUS AUXILIARY FIXED-BASED LABORATORIES

Following discussion of the definition of a noncontiguous auxiliary fixed-based laboratory, Dr. Griggs commented on the results of an informal survey of states and their definitions of such a laboratory. Some states use a radius in terms of mileage to define the limits of “contiguous,” while other states used more subjective methods of defining how far away laboratory facilities can be from one another before they are required to apply for separate accreditation. Dr. Griggs also commented that he felt it was necessary to contact more states in search of the best way to define the term “noncontiguous” in relation to fixed-based auxiliary laboratories and the need for separate accreditation of such. He requested suggestions from the attendees on this issue and welcomed input from all sources.

It was suggested by Dr. Griggs and agreed to by the committee that the proposed change to Chapter 4.0, Section 4.1.2a, concerning noncontiguous laboratory accreditation, should stand and be voted on at the upcoming Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting.

OTHER ISSUES

Transfer of Ownership

There were comments from the floor concerning the “transfer of ownership” of laboratory accreditation during the sale of a laboratory facility to another business entity. There was concern that laboratory accreditation should not be for sale and that Chapter 4 should clarify that an on-site inspection and approval of the new management’s quality system documentation by the primary accrediting authority be mandatory following any transfer of ownership of a laboratory facility. The committee agreed to review the current language.

It was suggested from the floor that a wording change be made in Section 4.1.8c. The word “may” should be replaced with “shall” to ensure consistency with other chapters. The committee agreed with the proposed change.

Proficiency Testing (PT) Samples

There was a suggestion from the floor that there be a wording change for consistency with other NELAC chapters in 4.1.4c. The terms “pass” and “fail” be changed to “acceptable” and “not acceptable” when referring to PT test samples in the first sentence. The second sentence would then also change to read “PT sample results shall apply to all accredited methods within the matrix for which a laboratory employs for an analyte.”

Section 4.4.4

In Section 4.4.4 there was a suggested wording addition that would change the sentence to read as follows, “If an environmental laboratory wishes to withdraw from National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP), in total or part, it must notify the primary accrediting authority in writing no later than 30 calendar days before the end of the accreditation year.” The addition being the phrase “in writing.”

Section 4.6.2

In Section 4.6.2 the term “accredited laboratory” is to be changed to “accrediting authority” as an editorial change to the first sentence of that paragraph.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the floor, Dr. Griggs thanked all those in attendance and adjourned the meeting.

**ACTION ITEMS
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Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Dr. Griggs will contact more state accrediting authorities to accumulate information on how noncontiguous auxiliary fixed-based laboratories are defined	Ongoing
2.	Dr. Griggs will coordinate meetings by teleconference with the Field Activities Committee on the topics of field measurements and mobile laboratories	Ongoing
3.	Committee will update language of Chapter 4 to reflect changes made in other chapters	Ongoing
4.	Committee will develop language for mobile labs associated with fixed-based laboratories	3/15/00
5.	Committee will review language in "change of ownership" in Section 4.1.8	3/15/00

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ACCREDITATION PROCESS COMMITTEE MEETING
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